

Message Text

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SUBJ: IMPLICATIONS OF SHAKE-UP AT RAI

SUMMARY: DEPARTURE OF RAI DIRECTOR GENERAL AND FANFANI COLLEAGUE ETTORE BERNABEI POSES POSSIBILITY OF FURTHER POLITICALIZATION OF RAI AND WEAKENING OF CONTROL OF CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS.

1. AFTER 14 CONTROVERSIAL YEARS AS THE HEAD OF ITALY'S STATE-CONTROLLED TV AND RADIO NETWORK, DIRECTOR GENERAL ETTORE BERNABEI - A CLOSE ASSOCIATE AND FRIEND OF CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT NATIONAL SECRETARY AMINTORE FANFANI - HAS RESIGNED. HIS RESIGNATION IS PART OF A REFORM MOVE PUSHED BY THREE OF THE FOUR PARTIES IN ITALY'S CENTER-LEFT COALITION.

2. THE RESIGNATION IS A HARBINGER OF SIGNIFICANT CHANGE IN RAI, REFLECTING THE PROVISIONS OF AN "EXECUTIVE PROTOCOL" AND A REFORM BILL APPROVED BY THE CABINET LAST APRIL. AMONG THE NEW PROVISIONS:

A) PARLIAMENT WILL SHARE, TO A MUCH GREATER EXTENT, CONTROL OF RAI WITH THE GOVERNMENT.

B) RAI'S ORGANIZATION CHART AND EMPLOYEE PATTERN WILL BE REVISED TO REFLECT MORE CLOSELY THE ACTUAL POLITICAL SLIGN-
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MENT IN THE COUNTRY. THIS MEANS THAT THE PERCENTAGE OF

EMPLOYEES ALLIED WITH THE DC WILL DECLINE RELATIVE TO THE OTHER PARTIES.

C) ONLY 7 DC-APPOINTED MEMBERS WILL SERVE ON THE 15-MAN BOARD OF DIRECTORS; THUS FOR THE FIRST TIME DC AFFILIATED MEMBERS WILL NOT HOLD AN ABSOLUTE MAJORITY. IN ADDITION, THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS WILL INCLUDE, ALSO FOR THE FIRST TIME, A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTY. OBVIOUSLY THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR POLITICAL PARTISANSHIP ARE GREATLY ENHANCED BY THIS ARRANGEMENT.

D) THERE WILL NO LONGER BE A SINGLE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT EDITOR IN CHARGE OF ALL TV NEWS AND ANOTHER CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT IN CHARGE OF ALL RADIO NEWS BUT RATHER SEPARATE EDITORS FOR EACH OF THE TWO MAIN DAILY TV AND RADIO NEWSCASTS. ONE OF THESE EDITORS WILL BE A CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT, THE OTHER WILL COME FROM ONE OF THE OTHER THREE COALITION PARTIES, MOST LIKELY THE PSI.

E) THE RAI PRESIDENCY, HERETOFORE ALWAYS OCCUPIED BY A DC, WILL NOW BE FILLED BY A SOCIALIST. THE PRESIDENT FUNCTIONS AS CHIEF EXECUTIVE RATHER THAN OVERSEER OF DAILY OPERATIONS.

F) THE DIRECTOR GENERAL WILL RETAIN AND PERHAPS EVEN INCREASE HIS POWER BECAUSE CHIEF EDITORS OF ALL TV AND RADIO NEWSCASTS WILL BE DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE TO HIM. BERNABEI'S SUCCESSOR WILL AGAIN BE A CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT AND WILL BE APPOINTED AFTER THE REFORM BILL IS APPROVED BY THE PARLIAMENT, PRESUMABLY BY THE END OF 1974. MEANWHILE, AN INTERIM DIRECTOR-GENERAL WILL FILL THE OFFICE. ACCORDING TO PRESS SPECULATIONS AND UNOFFICIAL STATEMENTS BY SOME RAI OFFICIALS, WILLY DE LUCA, CHIEF EDITOR OF TV'S NEWS SERVICE, LEONE PICCIONI, DEPUTY DIRECTOR GENERAL AND FABIANO FABIANI, CENTRAL DIRECTOR FOR TV CULTURAL AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS, ARE THE LEADING CANDIDATES.

4) WE CAN EXPECT CONSIDERABLE POLITICAL MANEUVERING TO RESULT FROM THESE CHANGES. HOWEVER, DESPITE THE INCREASE IN POWER AND JURISDICTION OF RAI'S DIRECTOR GENERAL, THE ABILITY OF THE DC TO CONTROL RAI WILL BE CHALLENGED BY THE OTHER COALITION PARTIES. THIS MAY LEAD TO A WEAKENING OF DC'S
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INFLUENCE OVER RAI, WHICH IS PERHAPS A REFLECTION OF RECENT NATIONAL POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN MICROCOSM. PRESS REACTION THUS FAR HAS ALMOST UNANIMOUSLY FAVORED THE DEVELOPMENT AS OPENING UP THE SOMEWHAT ARID AND CONSTINED RAI FARE TO MORE INNOVATIVE AND EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING. HOWEVER, SOME CONSERVATIVE ELEMENTS ARE CONCERNED THAT THE VOCAL LEFT WILL MAKE DAMAGING USE OF THIS OPPORTUNITY TO INCREASE ITS AMPLITUDE. AMERSON

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